



Borough of Tamworth

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**INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

8 February 2022

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee will be held in **Council Chamber, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7BZ on Wednesday, 16th February, 2022 at 6.00 pm.** Members of the Committee are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B.', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

NON CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 14)**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (personal and/or personal and prejudicial) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a personal interest or personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

4 Update from the Chair

5 Responses to Reports of the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee

Update on responses received to Reports of the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee

6 Consideration of Matters referred to the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Committee from Cabinet or Council

(Discussion item)

7 Economic Development Service Workplan (Pages 15 - 22)

(Report of the Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste)

8 Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee Work Plan Review (Pages 23 - 24)

(Update and discussion on the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Work Plan)

9 Forward Plan

(Discussion item – link to Forward Plan is attached)

<http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=120&RD=0&bcr=1>

10 Working Group Updates

To receive updates from any Working Groups

Access arrangements

If you have any particular access requirements when attending the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01827 709267 or e-mail democratic-services@tamworth.gov.uk. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

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If a member of the public is particularly concerned about accidental filming, please contact a member of Democratic Services before selecting a seat

FAQs

For further information about the Council's Committee arrangements please see the FAQ page [here](#)

To Councillors: S Goodall, T Clements, J Chesworth, R Claymore, A Cooper,
D Maycock, Dr S Peale, B Price

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19th JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: Councillor S Goodall (Chair), Councillors T Clements, R Claymore, A Cooper, D Maycock, Dr S People and B Price

The following officers were present: Anna Miller (Assistant Director – Growth & Regeneration), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Paul Weston (Assistant Director Assets), Lara Rowe (Castle Museum and Archive Manager) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Summers and J Chesworth.

58 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 23 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor Dr S People and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

60 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair reported that he would be notifying the Chair of the requirements for an additional Committee meeting to be held on 16th February 2022.

The Chair invited Councillor Dr S People to update the Committee on air quality / pollution which had been discussed at a recent West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Councillor Peale reported that work was underway to work collaboratively across the West Midlands area to model the air quality across the West Midlands to support the development of all air quality plan. It was reported that support, from Birmingham University who had been working in this area, was sought on modelling of air quality in the Tamworth area given the membership of Tamworth as a non-constituent part of the WMCA.

61 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE

The Chair reported that the Vice-Chair had attended Cabinet on 2 December 2021 to present two sets of recommendations from this Committee:

On the Infrastructure Funding Statement report the recommendations from this Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2021 were agreed by Cabinet as part of their consideration of the Infrastructure funding Statement 2020/21 as follows:

- a. Agreed that Cabinet regularly review how to spend the funds accumulated;
- b. Agreed that the process for member involvement and the spend of CIL is clarified by the relevant Portfolio Holder and a process is created where members under the right criteria can apply for funding.

On the Dry Recycling Contract Update where this Committee had recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet take note of the need for all areas of Council activity to be looking for opportunities to be more green, noting this as an example of an area, at its meeting on 2 December 2021, Cabinet acknowledged the feelings of the Scrutiny Committee and committed to considering the green agenda in all decision making in all areas going forward.

62 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL

No matters had been referred to this Committee by Cabinet or Council since the previous meeting.

63 RECOVERY & RESET

The Chair introduced the Recovery & Reset Programme Director / Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods who provided an overview of the workstream allocation between the scrutiny committees and highlighted that this Committee would specifically scrutinise the Building Utilisation and Economic Development workstreams. The presentations from the Assistant Directors would focus on

1. The structure of their highlight reports and whether these were at the right level of detail for the Committee;
2. Highlighting key milestones and triggers in their workstreams to help inform the Committee's work plan.
3. Inviting questions and feedback to inform the programme.

The Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration reported that the Economic Development project was split into four workstream areas, the first three of which were linked:

1. Business Intervention, where the project was looking to establish an economic baseline, which reflects the impacts of the pandemic on the economy of Tamworth, through a desk based data gathering exercise which would allow the Council to make further decisions through the next two workstream areas.
2. Economic Recovery & Development, where the project would assess the strategy for economic development and assess whether the priorities were correct, whether we were resourced correctly across the authority and whether activities reflected the impact of the COVID pandemic, which would inform the tailoring of any services.
3. Town centre regeneration, which involved refreshing the masterplan for the town centre, to make the most to maximise the regeneration of the town centre and to attract inward investment.
4. Marmion Regeneration, which would focus on Marmion House and the potential regeneration of the site.

In terms of activities, a brief for the baseline had been produced and was ready to go out to tender, which was expected to provide the data required in terms of worklessness, employment levels, salaries and activity.

In terms of the Marmion House regeneration, it was expected that relocation from this site would be between the period April to June 2023. De-commissioning of the building and timing around regeneration plans coming forward would require arrangements to be put in place to avoid Marmion House adversely impacting on the Town whilst this is progressed. To support the decision to decant from Marmion House which was made in summer 2021 by Cabinet / Council, some high level feasibility work had been undertaken on the regeneration of the site. Further feasibility work on what could be delivered on the site was being pursued and was expected to be available at the end of January 2022:

1. the first piece of work was expected to cover further feasibility of housing led development options, the quantum of development, given neighbouring uses and access
2. A piece of work in terms of the constraints on the site, including the existence of a sub-station which could impact on development, and an understanding of costs and construction methods.

The work above would be expected to provide a framework for what could be undertaken on the site and potential costs for such regeneration. Work in terms of the costs of demolition as a precursor of regeneration was also reported to be in train.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. the reasons for the targeted decant date of April to June 2023, where the Assistant Director reported that there were significant interdependencies, in terms of looking and securing new sites to locate into and in terms of preparing the Marmion House for future steps.
2. Whether the Council had reached out to neighbouring properties to consider whether further areas could be included within the project, where

it was reported that the initial work had considered a broader area, however, currently the regeneration was focussed on the Marmion house site only. It was confirmed that the constraints and viability study were not seeking to rule anything out at this stage and details would form part of the Cabinet paper on the 7th April 2022, now on the forward plan.

The Assistant Director, Assets reported that the Building Utilisation project was split into three workstream areas.

Work had been undertaken to scope out the Council's assets and the utilisation of those, where it was reported that, other than in the case of Marmion House, the Council's space was largely well utilised, and there was not much office or meeting space available. Discussions were ongoing with our tenants in Marmion House. In terms of the most leases on Marmion House there was a formal process to follow involving some specialist advice, and this risk had been identified.

The next phase was to identify potential accommodation to relocate into. Potential premises within the town centre had been identified, but this was at an early stage. Once a property was identified and negotiations concluded and the lease agreed, take occupation and then start fitting out the site, IT equipment and furniture moved in, staff trained up, ready for an April opening. There would also then be the decommissioning of the Marmion House site to complete. There remained interdependencies with the SMART working workstream, which would impact on the space requirements.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. The type of masts located at Marmion House, where it was confirmed that there were telecoms masts.
2. The energy efficiency of any new accommodation, where it was reported that we were looking to lease any property and therefore the fabric of the building could influence this, and any fit out would have to meet current regulations and reflect the term of any lease taken. This would be considered as part of the negotiations with the landlord(s).
3. The accommodation of the IT infrastructure in any new property and the space required to accommodate that, where the Assistant Director reported that the Head of ICT was involved and the requirement for space was expected to be less given the move to cloud based technology.
4. Whether we were looking for one site or more than one location and the length of any leases sought, where it was reported that Cabinet had expressed a preference for all our operations to be located in one place, however, this would depend on negotiations, as to whether this was feasible. In terms of the length of the lease the preference was for around 5 years. It was confirmed due to the commercial nature of the negotiations the locations were not disclosed at this point.
5. The meaning of SMART working, where it was reported that this meant different ways of working, including some home working, hybrid working (which included some working from home and some working from office space) and site workers, which was where such staff could not undertake their work from home.

6. Financial assumptions utilised for the accommodation requirements, where it was reported that the costs presented to Council in August 2021 were desk based, and would require market testing, and were established on an assumption that the Council would require approximately the equivalent floor space to 2 floors of Marmion House. These financial assumptions had made some provision for the ICT infrastructure requirement for SMART working.
7. Premises location, where it was clarified that the Cabinet preference was for a town centre location, however, if there was nothing suitable this could mean that alternative sites would be considered.
8. With regard to the new buildings being acquired under the Future High Street Fund, including part of Middle Entry, and whether these would become Council assets, where it was clarified that the Council would take interim stewardship before they were repurposed. Further clarification was sought on what the future use of this area of the site could be, where the Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration reported that the future design for this remained at this point under debate, and would be likely to be a flexible space managed by the Council and could include entrepreneurial activity and potential links with the college and would be run commercially.

The Chair reported that he would like to see these reports on a quarterly basis, and that at appropriate times would be considered confidentially.

64 CASTLE CURTAIN WALL TENDER

The Chair introduced the Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration and the Castle, Museum and Archive Manager to the Committee who were in attendance to provide an update on the Castle Curtain wall tender which was a report to be considered by cabinet on 20th January 2022.

The Assistant Director reported that a 2019 Condition Report had identified that there were a range of remedial works required to the Castle, and an urgent piece of work due to health and safety concerns, was required to the curtain wall that extends around the castle. As a result, the area around the wall, including a path, had been cordoned off.

A capital budget to carry out the urgent work had been previously identified and the architects had drawn up the necessary plans to go out to tender for the works. The report to Cabinet was seeking the necessary approvals to go out to tender, and to release some additional funding and to delegate authority to appoint the relevant contractor.

It had been identified that some additional works which were also required, could be delivered in tandem with the initial scope of works, and by delivering these together overall cost savings through minimising scaffolding costs would be expected.

The Committee sought clarification in the following areas:

1. What contingency was contained within the budget, where it was confirmed that there was a 10% contingency. The Committee noted that in the current environment, this contingency could be considered low.
2. The duration, timing and extent of the disruption expected whilst the works were undertaken, where it was reported that there would be minimal disruption to the main hall if all the works were carried out utilising the external scaffolding, and that the works would be expected to take around six months. It was further reported that if the tender exercise went well, the aim would be to start the works in Spring / Summer this year, however, it should be noted that this was a specialist piece of work for which there were limited contractors.
3. How the project would be managed and monitored to ensure a high quality of work was delivered, where it was reported that monitoring the quality of the job would be a core requirement in the tender evaluation.
4. Whether an external quality assurance check could be built into the project, where the Assistant Director reported that Council had contracted Castle architects whose remit could include this assurance activity.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that:

1. Cabinet instruct that the contracted castle architects act as external quality assurance for the works;

(Moved by Councillor Andrew Cooper and seconded by Councillor Simon Goodall)

2. previous contractors performance be taken into account in the tender appraisal.

(Moved by Councillor Dr Simon Peuple and seconded by Councillor Simon Goodall)

The Committee thanked the Officers for their attendance.

65 UPDATE ON COUNCIL HOUSING REPAIRS POLICY

The Chair reminded members that a report was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th December 2021 where Cabinet approved, in principle, the updated Council Housing Repairs Policy, delegated authority regarding the final policy, and approved consulting with residents.

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director, Assets who provided an overview of the current position to this Committee.

The Assistant Director reported that the outline draft Policy was a refresh of the existing 2016 approved Policy, and work in this area was looking at:

- building safety aspects, in anticipation of future regulation,
- to reflect additional qualitative data which was now received following the decision to bring back in house the repairs call centre; and
- the proposed move to a repairs process based on price per property.

The next steps were to go out to consult with the Tenants Consultative Group, and also to engage more widely with our tenants and the Communications team was providing support in this area.

The Committee supported the plan to engage more broadly and through different means with our tenants.

The Assistant Director reported that the aim would be to be able to implement the new policy from April 2022.

The Chair requested that the Assistant Director report back to the Committee at an appropriate date.

66 FIREWORKS WORKING GROUP

The Chair reported that a Fireworks Working Group had been set up, chaired by Councillor Clements, following the full Council decision on 15th December 2020 to refer to Scrutiny for further discussion two recommendations which had been made to full Council in a Motion to Enjoy Fireworks Responsibly.

The Chair invited Councillor Clements to update the Committee with the Working Group's conclusions.

Councillor Clements reported that following a couple of working group sessions the three main points that resulted were:

1. That the emphasis should be on the authority to lead by example and look at what we could do with our own displays.
2. That the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Council as a whole, should write to the Government Minister responsible for fireworks legislation.
3. To review the legislation applicable to the regulation of the sale of fireworks online, and to look at the impact on animals and how we could help.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to make two recommendations to Council.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to full Council that:

1. the Council look at all options with regards to visual aerial displays; and
2. the Leader of the Council write to the Minister with regard to:
 - online sales of fireworks and that this reflects the same legislation as shop sales of fireworks are guided by; and
 - the decibel level of fireworks available for the public's purchase be reviewed.

(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peaple)

67 FOCUS HALF DAY

The Chair reported that an all Councillor focus afternoon on community safety had been scheduled in February to which expected guests included the Staffordshire Police Crime and Fire Commissioner, Local Police Commander and

relevant Officers. This would allow further time for discussions. It was anticipated that following this afternoon session, a meeting of this Committee would consider the outcomes and any recommendations which the Committee felt were appropriate to make.

The Chair reported that he would circulate a list of agenda items to all Councillors for comments and any additional items to be raised.

Members of the Committee requested that the agenda include:

- E-Scooters;
- SMART Alert App

68 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan.

69 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

The Chair reported that he had met with Officers regarding the information requested to support the activities of the Travellers Working Group and that whilst this was delayed, it was expected.

70 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee updated the Committee's Work Plan as follows:

Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan 2021 - 2022	
DATE	SUBJECT
Quarterly updates	Future High Street Fund (Growth) – Quarterly updates – starting March 2021
Date to be confirmed 2021/22	Review of Taxi Licensing Policy – Points System
16th February 2022	Economic Development Service Workplan
February 2022	Community Safety overview to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Tamworth Police Commander • Invitation to Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner • CCTV update • E-Scooters and E-Bikes • Modern Slavery update • Business Crime Reduction Partnership Update
24th March 2022	Future High Streets Fund update
24th March 2022 (tbc)	Waste Management update
24th March 2022	Community Safety Plan
Date to be confirmed - 2021 /22	Garage Sites
Date to be confirmed	Review of policy / engagement with stakeholders relating to Travellers
July 2022 (tbc)	Fire Safety Update
Date to be confirmed - 2022	EV Charging update
Quarterly updates commencing pre 31.12.21	Waste Management
Quarterly	Reset & Recovery updates
Date to be confirmed	Council Housing Repairs Policy

Working Groups		
Topic	Possible WG Members	Target IS&G Com meeting date
Fireworks		Completed
Review of policy / engagement relating to Travellers		
Facilities for HGV Drivers in Tamworth	Cllrs B Price (WG chair) Dr S Peale and R Claymore	
Joint Task Group – Waste	To be confirmed	

Management (with Lichfield District Council)		
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Upcoming Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee Meetings

16 th February 2022 (new meeting)
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24 th March 2022

Chair

WEDNESDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SKILLS, PLANNING, ECONOMY AND WASTE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE WORKPLAN

EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

PURPOSE

To define and agree a 3-year work plan, with associated resources that addresses key Council priorities, by delivering Tourism and Economic Development focused activity, primarily in the Town Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee note:

1. A financial contribution is made to support Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP) for financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 with delegated authority given to the Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the relevant Portfolio holder(s) to make a decision on extending the contribution into financial year 2024/2025.
2. The package of economic measures detailed in the report focusing on Town Centre businesses and the wider tourism based economy are agreed.
3. The change of focus is noted from the current Start-Up Business grant to the Town Centre Business Grant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last two years have seen huge challenges for the local economy but also the potential for significant opportunity. The COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and resulting rapid changes in consumer behaviour have all significantly impacted on the economy, but the Town Centre, which was already in decline has struggled and is continuing to decline at an accelerated rate.

The significant success by the Council of attracting £21.65m of Future High Street funding for a £40m programme, to structurally transform the Town Centre over the next three years plays a key factor in helping revive this economy. In addition to this programme, the Council also has plans to regenerate two further sites in the town centre, which will commence over the same period – Gungate and the Marmion House site. These are important regeneration opportunities that have the potential to reinvent the town centre and create a place that people want to return to. In particular, the FHSF seeks to re-unite more successfully our heritage and cultural offer with the town centre. This top down approach will galvanise town businesses into evolving, adapting and changing what they offer and how they deliver it, to fit in with a different town centre experience, whether that be education, leisure, culture, heritage or hospitality related.

To assist the town centre economy in making necessary adaptive changes there needs to be bottom up or grass roots support. As such, and after consultation with Cabinet Members it is proposed to focus resource by expanding the existing Economic Development team and delivering on to two key work streams for the next three financial years, starting in April 2022

and up until the end of March 2025. The wider work of the team which includes regeneration, market operations, street trading and car parks will continue, but the primary focus for the economic development officers over this period will be:

1. Tourism and heritage development; and
2. Town Centre Business support programme

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Delivery

The Current Team

The ED team currently consists of 4 Officers as follows, supported by the Head of Service:

- 2 x Economic Development and Regeneration Officer, FT permanent.
- Skills Officer, 0.6 FTE, contracted until 31st March 2022.
- Economic Development Assistant – FT contracted until 31st March 2023.

The wider work of the team which includes regeneration, market operations, street trading and car parks will continue, but the primary focus for the economic development officers over this period will be: Tourism and heritage development; and Town Centre business support

The existing work plan has no specific provision for Town Centre businesses and as such focuses on delivering activities across the wider economy. Tourism strategy and stakeholder engagement is also not currently a primary focus as priorities have focused on delivering one off physical projects in the Town centre, such as visitor interpretation panels, wayfinding and heritage specific projects.

Tourism and heritage development

Tourism and Heritage represents one of the most significant opportunities Tamworth Town Centre has to draw in new consumers and strengthen its reputation as a destination. With consumers now actively seeking out new things to do in their spare time there is now a need to clarify and consolidate what tourism means to the local economy and how it needs to adapt to meet current consumer expectations.

From April 2022 to the end of March 2025, the Council will deliver and achieve the following:

- Invest £15,000 per annum into the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP). This commitment will be guaranteed for financial years (fy) 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. Dependent upon the successful delivery of agreed outputs a decision will be taken in quarter 4 of fy 2023/2024 whether to invest in the third and final year of this County Council led scheme.
- The key themes of the Council involvement with the DMP will be as follows;
 - Targeted marketing and campaigns to maximise Staffordshire's profile, and the respective contributor City/District and Boroughs, to attract more visitors.
 - Overseeing and commissioning research and intelligence to inform the activities of the visitor economy sector and to shape our offer and future priorities.
 - Lobbying and advocacy work to influence key policy makers to shape the direction of the sector and maximise Staffordshire's role and profile.
 - Business support activities and signposting to help the visitor economy renew and transform following on from the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Allocate £40k to the development of a bespoke Borough –wide Tourism strategy that will be implemented from April 2023. This will require external support and will be tendered for externally by the end of August 2022.

- Allocate an annual project budget of £10,000 (individual value of <£5k) that can be used for a variety of small projects. This money will be focused on Town Centre and Tourism related projects.
- Allocate funding to provide additional staff resource for a further two years to ensure there is enough capacity for delivery.
- Proactively engage with relevant stakeholders, partners and businesses to ensure that activity delivered is appropriate, coordinated and supported.
- Identify and apply for relevant sources of funding that contribute to the objectives of the Tourism strategy.

Tamworth is currently known primarily as a tourism destination for Ventura retail park, Snowdome and Drayton Manor Park which is just outside of the Borough boundaries. Nearby Towns, cities and high profile destinations over shadow our offer such as the Castle. There is a key role post pandemic in presenting our offer to new and growing markets and visitors.

Town Centre Business support programme

Town Centres across the country are facing significant challenges, but in Tamworth, these are primarily seen as the following:

Change in customer behaviour to online shopping; a customer focus on experience and quality rather than low value items; impact of social media on business and place reputation; quality of offer in competing areas; proximity and connections to Birmingham; cost of starting a business in a town centre; availability of property to the right quality; current offer does not to appeal to broad market; physical environment in the town centre.

There also a number of more strategic issues facing Tamworth as follows:

- **COVID-19 pandemic** – the pandemic had a significant impact on the high street and business to consumer businesses with a channel shift to online shopping having accelerated even faster than expected – many businesses need support to evolve to the new normal. The pandemic also represents a significant opportunity as many consumers are now seeking out a tourism and experience led offer, that Tamworth is uniquely placed to maximise.
- **Brexit** – whilst somewhat overshadowed by the impact of the pandemic, the impact of Brexit is only just being seen on the local economy. In particular changes to export and importing, availability of staff and a whole new business support regime – shared prosperity fund, are key work streams that will require investment by the team. Many of the council's current business support schemes are funded by Europe and expire in 2023 – significant work will be needed to contribute to new schemes under the Shared Prosperity Fund, that are due to be announced in 2022.
- **Town Centre Regeneration** – the council will be delivering three large regeneration schemes across the Town Centre at different stages over the next 3 years, specifically FHSF, Gungate Masterplan site and Marmion House. Whilst the majority of the team is not directly involved in delivery, the ED team will be the first point of call for businesses who are nervous, don't understand what is being planned or want to take advantage of the opportunities presented.

To meet the challenges facing businesses in the Town Centre a package of economic support has been prepared. The package will consist of two elements to solely support Town Centre businesses, as defined by the boundary used for the Business Improvement District;

- A business advice service
- A direct grants programme

In consultation with Cabinet it has been agreed that the high level objective of the overall business support programme will be:

- To attract and support new businesses to open in the Town Centre
- To encourage existing businesses to evolve, grow and adapt
- To encourage the diversification of business types in the town centre with a specific focus on food / hospitality and leisure / heritage.

Businesses not in the Town Centre will continue to be supported by the work of the Economic Development team and strategic partners (e.g. Growth Hubs, Chambers of Commerce).

From April 2022 to the end of March 2025, the Council will deliver and achieve the following:

- Invest up to £15,000 per annum into an external provider to deliver a tailored business support programme for Town Centre businesses that are primarily independent with a consumer focus.
- The support programme will:
 - Improve peer to peer mentoring and networking opportunities
 - Help businesses fully understand their challenges
 - improve skills and knowledge
 - give businesses practical advice on the changes they need to make in order to adapt and thrive.
- Manage, administer and deliver a grants programme of up to £25,000 per annum into for Town Centre businesses. Linked to the business support programme, grants will support businesses who have an opportunity to grow and adapt to current and emerging opportunities.
- Deliver small one off projects (individual value of <£5k) that contribute to Town Centre businesses evolving and thriving, with a budget of £10k per annum.
- Allocate funding to provide additional staff resource for a further two years to ensure there is enough capacity for delivery.
- Proactively engage with relevant stakeholders, partners and businesses to ensure that activity delivered is appropriate, coordinated and supported.

1. Business Advice Service

Town Centre businesses tend to be small independents with limited resources and capacity that may struggle to make the adaptations they need to meet current consumer expectations and standards.

To support these businesses a business support advisor will be tendered for externally. The successful contractor will be required to work seamlessly with the Economic Development Team to provide regular monitoring updates on the programme progress, insights into the business community and to support with recommendations for which businesses should go forward for the grant scheme. The tender will purposefully be left loose in terms of actual defined activity to ensure the Council benefits from the experience of potential suppliers to propose what has worked in other places. Due to the specific challenges facing Town Centre businesses, the Economic Development team does not currently have the specific skills or knowledge required to deliver this service directly.

An external organisation that specialises in this sort of delivery will have economies of scale, existing connections and examples of good practice and what works, allowing support to be deployed more quickly to those businesses in need. Working closely with the chosen supplier, the Economic Development Team will be able to update their skills and knowledge in this area, ensuring opportunities for future delivery of Town Centre business support is sustainable.

2. Town Centre Business Grant

The Town Centre Business Grant is designed to support Tamworth Town Centre businesses who will only be able to apply after receiving support through the business support programme, with priority being given to SME businesses in the food and hospitality / leisure and heritage sectors. This grant will replace the current Start-Up Business grant, which will cease.

Grants will only be aimed at businesses that are classed as being a Small to Medium Enterprise, (SME, <250 employees) and are not part of a significant chain, national or multinational business. In exceptional circumstances where significant positive impact on the Town Centre can be shown, grants may be considered out of scope, such as; high numbers of new additional jobs, new high profile chain that wouldn't invest without support, substantial secondary impact of investment in supply chain and other local businesses.

There will be £75,000 allocated to grants over 3 years, with a nominal annual budget of £25,000. It is recognised that as the programme progresses take up and demand for grants may start off slow but increase, so it is important that at the end of each year financial year any underspend will be retained to ensure businesses can always benefit from the overall grant allocation across the 3 year period.

The grant aims to focus on the following specific areas to support the business adapt and grow. The more grant aims businesses can hit, the stronger the chance of approval, however it is not expected that businesses must meet every criteria:

- Training on subjects that benefit the operation of the businesses
- Skills
- Culture and behaviour to support the vision for the business, aspiration, strategy setting, business model, future planning, resilience, environmental sustainability.
- Innovation to evolve the business by way of new products, new services, new ways of working, technology.
- Enhancements to shop fronts and trading spaces

The business will be required to demonstrate within their application / business plan how the proposed project and a successful grant award will lead to either:

- More revenue
- Better reputation / image for their business and the Town Centre.
- Improved staff skills
- Clearer objectives for the business to grow and adapt

The grant process is based upon on the existing Start Up Business grant scheme and would be administered internally by the Economic Development Team with support from the business advisors contracted to deliver the business support programme. The role of the external business advisors would be as follows:

- To refer businesses to apply for the grant
- Ensure the business has received adequate support and guidance to enhance their business operations,
- Provide feedback to the ED Team to support with decision making on applications.

The final decision on applications will remain with the ED Team who will put forward recommendations to members through the Nominations and Grants Committee, allowing the business advisors to remain impartial and continue to work with the business ensuring fair decisions without prejudice. The business advisors would also be required to work with the

business post successful application ensuring all projects are successfully delivered as approved, with outputs realised.

The ED Team will work with the business support provider to ensure the grants scheme meet business need. In year one – financial year 2022 / 2023, the grant scheme will start from quarter 3 to ensure there is enough time for marketing and the business advisor service to assess demand and need.

From quarter 3 2022/2023 on the grant scheme will be ran quarterly in line with Nominations and Grants committee meetings. Grants will be awarded from a minimum of £2500 to a maximum of £10,000 per businesses, unless there is exceptional reason to make a larger grant.

As the grant scheme evolves and demand comes forward for businesses these forms may need to be adapted. Any changes will be made in consultation with the relevant Portfolio holder.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

None

EQUALITIES IMPLICATION

None

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE)

None

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Economic Development Team, have the following significant work streams over the next three years which includes the package of measures described in the above sections.

- Contract management, engagement and delivery with Staffs DMP.
- Commissioning, coordination and delivery of a Tourism Strategy
- Delivery of actions and projects resulting from Tourism strategy
- Stakeholder engagement and management with Tourism partners and economy.
- Town Centre and Heritage related project delivery – e.g. interpretation boards, digital marketing, wayfinding.
- Commissioning, coordination, contract management and delivery of a Town Centre business support package.
- Delivery and monitoring of a Town Centre business grants process
- Design, commission and deliver an economic baseline review for the reset and recovery programme.
- Monitor and research useful economic and town centre data producing regular reports to input into other services and regeneration programmes / funding bids.
- Lead day to day engagement with Town Centre businesses on Future High street Fund
- Design, delivery and commissioning of business support schemes, both internally and with partners.
- Engage with stakeholders involved in wider business support – LEPS, Growth Hubs, LA's, central Government
- Deliver activities that contribute towards inward investment and wider place promotion.
- Act as a gateway for local business support and advice, signposting to relevant support.
- Identify and apply for relevant funding to deliver projects in line with the objectives of the service – Shared Prosperity Fund, Regional Investment Fund, cultural recovery fund, Heritage Funds, Local Government Association.

- Contract management, monitoring and delivery of existing European Regional development Fund projects.
- Monitor and keep up to date on local activity on employment and skills.

REPORT AUTHOR

Matthew Fletcher – Head of Economic Development and Regeneration

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Town centre – Cabinet report - 08.11.2018
- Town centre work streams – Corporate Scrutiny - 08.12.2019
- Start up business grant review – Cabinet Report - 06.02.2020
- Reopening High Streets Safely fund – Scheme of Delegation 24.09.2020
- Welcome Back Fund – Cabinet 08.07.2021

APPENDICES

None

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Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan 2021 - 2022	
DATE	SUBJECT
Quarterly updates	Future High Street Fund (Growth) – Quarterly updates – starting March 2021
Date to be confirmed 2021/22	Review of Taxi Licensing Policy – Points System
16th February 2022	Economic Development Service Workplan
February 2022	Community Safety overview to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Tamworth Police Commander • Invitation to Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner • CCTV update • E-Scooters and E-Bikes • Modern Slavery update • Business Crime Reduction Partnership Update
24th March 2022	Future High Streets Fund update
24th March 2022 (tbc)	Waste Management update
24th March 2022	Community Safety Plan
24th March 2022	Reset & Recovery – Marmion House regeneration
Date to be confirmed - 2021 /22	Garage Sites
Date to be confirmed	Review of policy / engagement with stakeholders relating to Travellers
July 2022 (tbc)	Fire Safety Update
Date to be confirmed - 2022	EV Charging update
Quarterly updates commencing pre 31.12.21	Waste Management
Quarterly	Reset & Recovery updates
Date to be confirmed	Council Housing Repairs Policy

Working Groups		
Topic	Possible WG Members	Target IS&G Com meeting date
Review of policy / engagement relating to Travellers		
Facilities for HGV Drivers in	Cllrs B Price (WG chair)	

Tamworth	Dr S Peaple and R Claymore	
Joint Task Group – Waste Management (with Lichfield District Council)	To be confirmed	

Upcoming Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee Meetings
16 th February 2022 (new meeting) 24 th March 2022